

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 PC-01 CU-02 SSC-01 OMB-01 EUR-12

MCT-01 NEA-10 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /088 W

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R 081107Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7590

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, CT

SUBJECT: CABINET RESHUFFLED AND NAMED "REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL"

SUMMARY: ON HIS RETURN FROM LIBYA SEPTEMBER 4, PRESIDENT BOKASSA ANNOUNCED REORGANIZATION OF THE CABINET AS A "REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL" AND SHUFFLED SOME OF HIS MINISTERS. THE NEW TITLE FOR THE CABINET APPEARS PRIMARILY DESIGNED TO MAINTAIN AN AURA OF REVOLUTIONARY DYNAMISM FOR BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PURPOSES. ANGE PATASSE, AN OLD CONFIDANT OF THE PRESIDENT'S IS FORMALLY DESIGNATED NUMBER TWO MAN IN THE GOVERNMENT AND VICE PRESIDENT OF HIS COUNCIL. FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER POTOLOT HAS RETURNED AS MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. END SUMMARY.

1. IN TRANSFORMING THE CABINET INTO A REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL, THE PRESIDENT ALSO MERGED TO SOME EXTENT PARTY AND GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION. THE COUNCIL IS CREATED "IN THE CADRE OF MESAN" (THE SINGLE POLITICAL PARTY), AND THE POSITIONS OF SECRETARY-GENERAL AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE PARTY ARE ABOLISHED. THE RADIO COMMENTARY SUBSEQUENTLY PUT THE CREATION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL IN THE CONTEXT OF THE MEETINGS TO RESTRUCTURE THE PARTY WHICH BEGAN WITH THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH OF JULY 24.

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2. THE PRESIDENT HAS RELINQUISHED HIS POSITIONS AS MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE, POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS, AND PUBLIC OFFICES AND SOCIAL SECURITY. THE DECREE SPECIFIES THAT IN GENERAL HE IS GIVING UP ALL HIS DIRECT MANAGEMENT OF MINISTRIES, ALTHOUGH HE RESERVES THE RIGHT TO INTERVENE WHEN NECESSARY. BOKASSA RETAINS TITLE OF COMMANDER IN CHIEF.

3. AMONG THE CABINET CHANGES IS THE FORMAL DESIGNATION OF ANGE PATASSE TO THE NUMBER TWO POSITION IN THE GOVERNMENT. ALTHOUGH HE WAS PREVIOUSLY LISTED FIRST AMONG THE MEMBERS OF THE CABINET, HE NOW HAS THE TITLE: "VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL WITH THE RANK OF PRIME MINISTER." PATASSE WAS A MEMBER OF BOKASSA'S FIRST CABINET WHEN HE TOOK POWER IN 1966 AND HAS BEEN IN THE GOVERNMENT CONTINUOUSLY SINCE, EXCEPT FOR A BRIEF PERIOD OF DISGRACE IN APRIL AND MAY OF THIS YEAR.

4. FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER AND MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS POTOLOT, WHO ALSO LEFT THE CABINET IN APRIL, HAS RETURNED, THIS TIME AS MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS ONLY. THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR, THEODORE-BLAISE LAMINE, WAS MADE MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO AND DEMOTED TO NEAR THE BOTTOM OF THE CABINET LIST. FORMER MINISTER OF PLAN, MOKODOPO, WHO MAY STILL BE IN WASHINGTON NEGOTIATING WITH THE WORLD BANK, IS NOW MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH, HAVING CHANGED PLACES WITH ANDRE-DIEUDONNE MAGALE. THERE IS ONLY ONE ADDITION (A SECRETARY OF STATE IN CHARGE OF EQUALIZATION AND STABILIZATION OF PRODUCTS) AND NO DELETIONS. FULL LISTING OF CABINET AND TITLES FOLLOWS BY UNCLASSIFIED TELEGRAM.

5. COMMENT: THE CHANGES SEEM TO REFLECT BOTH A CONTINUING WORKING OUT OF THE AFTERMATCH OF THE FEBRUARY COUP ATTEMPT WITH MOST OF THOSE DROPPED AT THAT TIME NOW FULLY-RE-ESTABLISHED, AS WELL AS AN EFFORT TO KEEP UP SOME "REVOLUTIONARY" MOMENTUM FOR BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PURPOSES. WE SEE LITTLE LIKLIHOOD OF A CHANGE IN THE BASICALLY CONSERVATIVE NATURE OF BOKASSA'S ONE-MAN RULE, HOWEVER.
QUAINTON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CABINET, PERSONNEL MOVEMENTS, FORM OF GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BANGUI01676
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760339-0531
From: BANGUI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760983/aaaacthl.tel
Line Count: 97
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 JUN 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <04 OCT 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CABINET RESHUFFLED AND NAMED "REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL" SUMMARY: ON HIS RETURN FROM LIBYA SEPTEMBER 4, PRESIDENT BOKASSA ANNOUNCED REORGANIZATION OF THE CABINET AS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, CT, (BOKASSA, JEAN BEDEL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006